

## Making Strides in Lake St. Croix Beach

It's no surprise that people living in Lake St. Croix Beach care about the health of the St. Croix River. For some, the river is literally a stone's throw away!

EMWREP coordinated with LSCB to host three workshops for residents and elected officials in August and September, all of which were well received. The first workshop was an overview of water quality issues in the St. Croix Valley and of resources available through the Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water Program. The next workshop focused specifically on raingardens, with information on what they are, where and how to build them and what plants to use. The final workshop, led by landscape restoration specialist Shawn Tracy, covered issues relating to shoreline and bluff management. The workshop was particularly useful for parks commission and council members in LSCB, as the city owns nearly a mile of land along the St. Croix.

In addition to these three workshops, LSCB also planted two new raingardens in September near their city hall. The raingardens were partially funded by a grant from the Middle St. Croix WMO, with a design by the Washington Conservation District.



Lake St. Croix Beach recently planted two new raingardens near their city hall.



The raingardens planted at the Washington County Fairgrounds in 2006 are now lush and colorful.

## August Means Fair Time

EMWREP teamed up with the Washington Conservation District again this year to sponsor a booth at Washington County Fair.

EMWREP also joined Blue Thumb program partners at MN State Fair's Eco Experience.

Both fairs were a great opportunity to talk with the general public and it was inspiring to meet so many people that were excited and knowledgeable about raingardens. Nearly 350,000 people visited the Eco Experience!



Southview Design created the demonstration raingarden for the State Fair Eco Experience and Blue Thumb partners were on hand to answer questions.

## Register **NOW** for the Stormwater U Bioretention Maintenance Workshop

EMWREP will be cosponsoring a Stormwater U workshop on Friday, October 16, from 7:30am-1pm at the Washington County South Service Center. The workshop will focus on maintenance of raingardens and other bioretention measures with an outdoor field component as well.

The South Service Center is an ideal location for the workshop, as there are several well-maintained bioretention areas in the parking lot that were planted in 2007. The gardens were funded by a South Washington Watershed grant with technical assistance from the WCD.

Register for the workshop on-line at [www.extension.umn.edu/stormwater](http://www.extension.umn.edu/stormwater).

## Targeted Community Assistance

Over the past year, EMWREP has partnered with the MN DNR and Northland NEMO to host a series of popular workshops for local elected officials. The workshops have highlighted water quality issues in the St. Croix Basin, as well as focusing on Low Impact Development techniques and Best Management Practices.

This spring we plan to conduct focus group sessions with local officials to identify further training needs. We are also hoping to create model ordinances and establish pilot projects in local communities as part of the new Minimum Impact Development Standards legislation.

## Targeting Outreach to Businesses

This summer, EMWREP has begun working with the MPCA and other watersheds to develop strategies for promoting commercial BMP's. So far, we have a draft web page on the [www.cleanwatermn.org](http://www.cleanwatermn.org) web site and are creating fact sheets to accompany the web info.

Staff from the WCD and Metro Conservation Districts are also fine-tuning a protocol for prioritizing business to target for outreach. The protocol ranks businesses based on their visibility, likelihood to implement BMP's and the degree to which BMP's at various properties could reduce stormwater pollution.

By next year, we hope to begin using the new outreach materials at high priority businesses to get local projects underway.

## Survey of Cost-Share Recipients

Thanks to WCD and watershed cost-share grant programs, local residents have planted raingardens, stabilized shoreline and streambank properties and installed innovative BMP's. There are over 100 projects in progress this year alone!

This fall, EMWREP will survey cost-share grant recipients to evaluate the success of these grant programs. In addition to assessing recipients opinions about the program, we hope to gauge the educational impact of cost-share grant programs. Are demonstration projects helping to raise awareness of water resource issues? Have cost-share grant projects inspired neighbors and friends to change their behaviors? Survey findings should be available by the end of the year.

## Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Brown's Creek Watershed • Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed • Cottage Grove • Dellwood • Forest Lake • Lake Elmo • Middle St. Croix Watershed • Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed • Rice Creek Watershed • Stillwater • South Washington Watershed • Valley Branch Watershed • Willernie • West Lakeland • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

